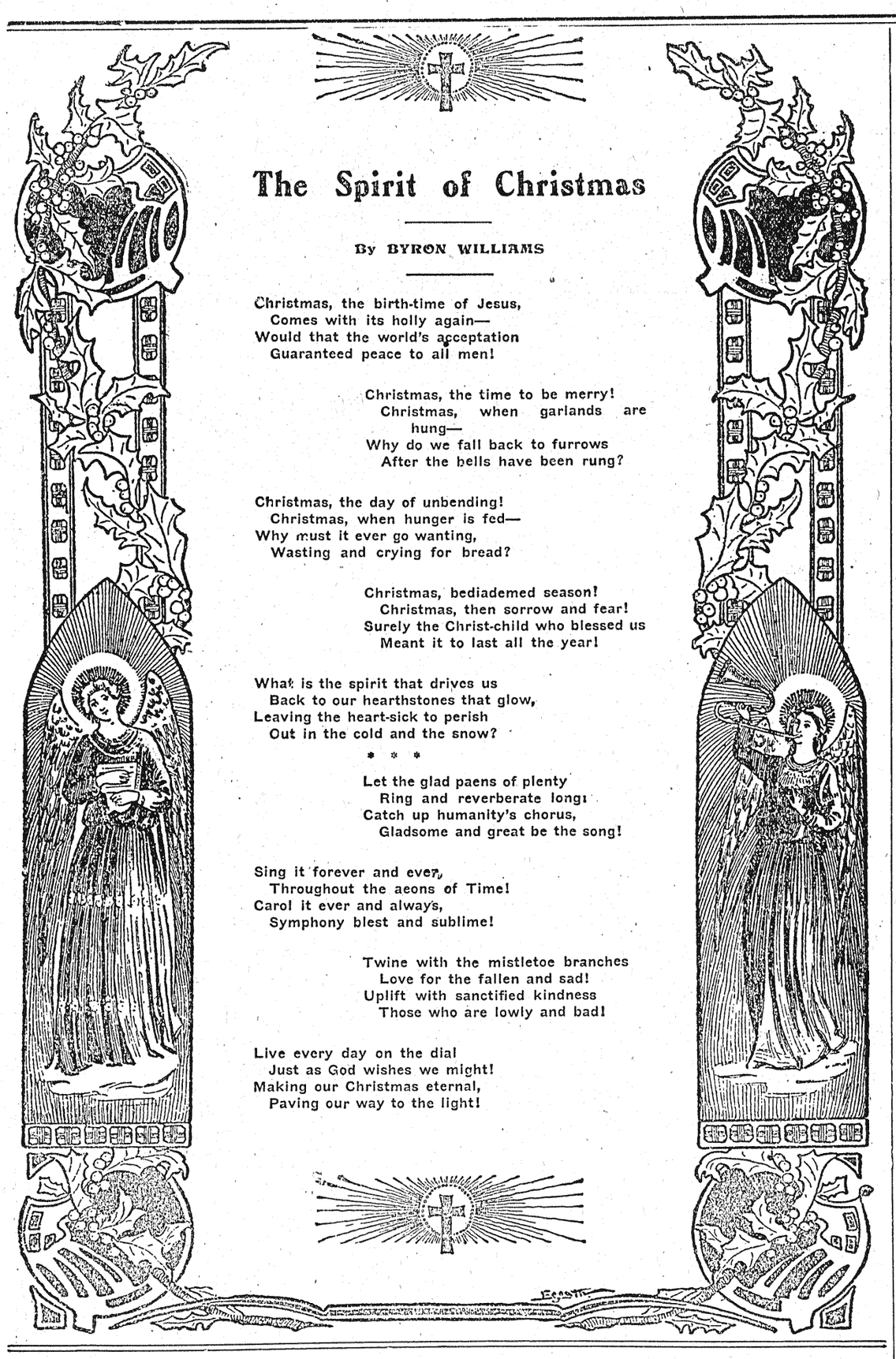

The Spirit of Christmas

By BYRON WILLIAMS

Christmas, the birth-time of Jesus,
Comes with its holly again—
Would that the world's acceptation
Guaranteed peace to all men!

Christmas, the time to be merry!
Christmas, when garlands are hung—
Why do we fall back to furrows
After the bells have been rung?

Christmas, the day of unbending!
Christmas, when hunger is fed—
Why must it ever go wanting,
Wasting and crying for bread?

Christmas, bediademed season!
Christmas, then sorrow and fear!
Surely the Christ-child who blessed us
Meant it to last all the year!

What is the spirit that drives us
Back to our hearthstones that glow,
Leaving the heart-sick to perish
Out in the cold and the snow?

* * *

Let the glad paens of plenty
Ring and reverberate long:
Catch up humanity's chorus,
Gladsome and great be the song!

Sing it forever and ever,
Throughout the aeons of Time!
Carol it ever and always,
Symphony blest and sublime!

Twine with the mistletoe branches
Love for the fallen and sad!
Uplift with sanctified kindness
Those who are lowly and bad!

Live every day on the dial
Just as God wishes we might!
Making our Christmas eternal,
Paving our way to the light!

Celebrations the World Over

Christmas in the South.

Fireworks are being shipped into all parts of the South for the Christmas and New Year holiday celebrations, says the New York Tribune. Large consignments have been going out every day during the past three or four weeks, and these shipments will continue until after Christmas. It was estimated by two prominent local dealers last week that not less than $1,000,000 worth of Roman candles, rockets, pinwheels, crackers, torpedoes and colored fire powder will be set off south of the Mason and Dixon's line during the last week of the dying year. In the South the Christmas celebration takes the place of the Independence day celebration, there being little demonstration there on the Fourth of July. This has been true for many years, both of the cities and country districts, but since the Spanish-American war the people of the South have entered more heartily into the noisy observance of the Fourth. Colored folks will spend their last dollar for firecrackers and rockets.

Christ's Birthplace.

According to an article by Paul Carus in The Open Court, Chicago, the apocryphal gospels tell a somewhat different story of Christ's birth from the canonical books. According to the former, Christ was born in a cave and thence trasferred to a stable, where the ox and ass worshiped him, while, according to the canonical gospels, the Nativity takes place in a stable. The apocryphal legends proved so strong that in spite of the canonical version of the story, a cave near Bethlehem came to be finally regarded as the place of the Nativity, and a church was erected on the spot to commemorate the event and still stands as a lasting monument of this belief.

Christmas in Bohemia.

Bohemia alone, among all the Christian countries, makes Christmas a day of rigorous fasting. Even children are expected to deny themselves all food from sunrise to sunset. This day is also a veritable collection day for workmen of every class, and the master of the house needs a pocketful of money to satisfy all the demands made upon him by the artisans, musicians, pot-menders, bell-ringers, chimneysweeps, cobblers, etc., who throng the house from early dawn to wish him a "Merry Christmas" and receive from him a remembrance.

Merry Christmas.

In the rush of early morning,
When the red burns through the gray,
And the wintry world lies waiting
For the glory of the day,
Then we hear a fitful rustling
Just without upon the stair,
See two small white phantoms coming,
Catch the gleam of sunny hair.

Are they Christmas fairies stealing
Rows of little socks to fill?
Are they angels floating hither
With their message of good-will?
What sweet spell are these elves weaving,
As like larks they chirp and sing?
Are these palms of peace from heaven
That these lovely spirits bring?

Rosy feet upon the threshold,
Eager faces peeping through,
With the first red ray of sunshine,
Chanting cherubs come in view,
Mistletoe and gleaming holly,
Symbols of a blessed day,
In their chubby hands they carry,
Streaming all along the way.

Well we know them, never weary
Of this innocent surprise;
Waiting, watching, listening always
With full hearts and tender eyes,
While our little household angels,
White and golden in the sun,
Greet us with the sweet old welcome—
"Merry Christmas, every one!"
—Louise Alcott.

Some Christmas Notes.

In Silesia there is a superstition that a boy born on Christmas day must be brought up a lawyer or he will become a thief.

Christmas mince pies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were made with crust so shaped as to represent the manger.

In the fourth century the celebration of Christmas was fixed by the Latin church for December 25th. Before that time it had been a movable festival like Easter.

In France it is a common practice to celebrate Christmas by giving an extra ration to domestic animals, on the theory that all creatures should unite in rejoicing at this season.

Mince pies are first mentioned in 1596 as in common use at Christmas time. Culinary authorities declared that they might be eaten as early as December 14. They were made of mutton, mixed with raisins, cloves, allspice, nuts, and other ingredients.

The children at Bethlehem are still told by their mothers that on Christmas eve a choir of angels always sing above the place where Christ was born. Travelers say that on this evening scores, and sometimes hundreds of children may be seen in the open air, looking up into the sky, waiting to hear the angels sing.

In Sweden there is a superstition that the men of the extreme northern regions become wolves during Christmas week.

Holly the "Holy" Tree.

In the middle of the Forest of Dean, England, there stands a building called the Speech House, around which grows a number of old holly trees. They were looked upon by the folk of the locality with so much veneration that, so recently as 1830, boughs were cut from them and used to take the place of the Testament in swearing in witnesses in the adjoining court. It is said that the ancient Britons held the tree as sacred, and planted it round their villages in Cornwall. When holly came to be coupled with Christmas other notions prevailed. In Rutlandshire it was thought unlucky to bring it into the house before Christmas. In the Western shires the branches were taken home from the churches which they had adorned and kept for luck during the following year. School boys used to make birdlime by chewing the bark. Because the leaves of its lower branches are more spiny than those of the upper, the tree escapes damage from cattle, which cause harm to most trees. Deer, however, attack it.—Little Folks.

Celebration at Lima, Peru.

Probably the most gorgeous Christmas spectacle in the world takes in Lima, Peru, where a wonderful procession several miles long winds through the streets, bearing figures of hundreds of saints and the sacred pictures of the cathedral. Many thousands of soldiers in their bright uniforms, Indian women, decked with ribbons and flowers, and asses heavily laden with choice fruits and harnessed with strings of golden bells all appear in line, and on stands passed by the parade are representations of scenes from the Nativity. At night the whole city makes merry with guitars, castanets and weird native dances, and the celebration ends with great public feasts where rich and poor exchange greetings.

True Meaning of Christmas.

In all the mirthmaking and the happiness of the coming holiday time we should not get too far away from the fact that of all the celebrations of the year it is the one that unquestionably belongs in its higher meaning to the humble and the poor.

"And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

JONES PAID THE FREIGHT

Clergyman's Use of Slang Was Unfortunate in This Case.

A few days following a recent uptown wedding, the officiating clergyman requested a friend to have an advertisement of the marriage inserted in the papers. The friend first ascertained the cost, and then wrote to the rector for instruction, when the dominie replied: "Put it in; Jones will pay the freight."

Now it happened that the friend had been discussing the wedding with a Mr. Jones, a near relative of the bridegroom, and, going to a telephone, called up Jones and explained the circumstance to him.

A rather astonished voice replied: "All right; put it in."

The clergyman, on meeting the friend later, said: "I want to pay you for that advertisement."

"You do not owe for that. Jones paid the bill."

"What?"

"Why, did you not tell me Jones would pay?"

"Yes."

"Well, I had it charged to Jones."

"What Jones?"

"The bridegroom's brother-in-law."

For a moment the rector looked as though he were going to have a stroke, then said: "Why, I meant that old joke, 'Jones will pay the freight,' meaning by Jones myself."—Philadelphia Ledger.

BROUGHT HIM TO EARTH.

Bishop Potter Tells a Humorous Story on Himself.

Bishop Potter has a fund of humor that makes his stories extremely entertaining. Not long ago he told the following:

"When one has lived for years in America without any special title in ordinary conversation, it is not easy to become accustomed to being hailed as 'my lord' whenever any service is rendered. During my various trips to Europe I found it impossible to go anywhere or do anything without being 'lorded', right and left. At last I was in a fair way of becoming spoiled, when a little occurrence mercifully delivered me. I had reached home after a run abroad, and while descending the gangplank met a friend, an old vestryman of mine. He was hurrying on board to receive his wife and daughters. Pausing midway up the plank, he grasped my hand and shouted:

"'Why, hellow, Bish! How are you?'"—Harper's Weekly.

What Shall We Eat?

A writer in the October 31 issue of Harper's Weekly makes a plea for the scientific regulation of food. It is a striking fact, he points out, that science, which has weighed the moon and measured the orbits of the planets and split the atom into electrons, has not yet been able convincingly to tell man what is and what is not his proper food. And yet it is evident to every intelligent observer that a very large proportion of men and women are poisoning themselves every day, ruining their bodies and their minds, shortening their lives, and bringing upon themselves pain and misery through eating and drinking substances and quantities that are not fitted for human assimilation. "Reformers are at work everywhere, but the reformer who could, with authority, show humanity what it should eat and drink would surely do more good than a whole army of wiseacres tinkering at the effects of the evil. What the world needs is an authoritative science of food."

Offer of True Sportsman.

"Billy" Oliver, one of the Waldorf crowd, stood on the floor of the Stock Exchange the day after the Heinze decisions apparently prepared to take everything offered. For half an hour everything came his way. One broker in particular sold the list all round. Oliver took Atchison, Amalgamated, Union Pacific—in fact, everything. The bear trader weakened gradually. The selling movement was entirely checked. Oliver stood in the middle of a crowd, cool and collected as ever. Picking out the chief seller of stocks, he asked:

"Haven't you anything else to sell?"

"Not now!" said the other.

"I'll give you a dollar for your boots!" said Oliver.—New York Times.

Repairs Ahead for Papa.

"Harold," said Mrs. Goodchild to her young son. "Did you tell that next door boy what your father said about this wicked habit of fighting and quarreling?"

"Yes, ma."

"Did you remember to explain how your father pointed out that, in addition to the sinfulness of it and the bruises and cuts you get, your clothes suffer also, and thus your parents are put to unnecessary expense?"

"Yes, ma."

"And that if ever your father sees him fighting with you again he will speak to his parents about it?"

"Yes, ma."

"And what did he say?"

"He sair, 'Send the old dub around and I'll bust in his slats.'"—New York Press.

Just About the Same Thing.

Johnnie was much interested in all his Aunt Clara's wedding preparations but most especially in his wedding gift to her, which he had been told was to be a chafing dish. After having had it pointed out to him, where it rested among the other gifts, he marched straight to his mother, and in a thoroughly disgusted tone said:

"Mamma, that wedding present I gave Aunt Clara is nothing but a kitchen skillet!"

Lyre Lisps and Other Mention

By HARLAN E. BABCOCK

SETTIN' 'ROUND THE FIREPLACE.

When the leaves commence a-turnin' an' the air begins to bite;
When it's bracin' in the daytime, an' it's crispy-like at night;
When you feel like shoutin' "Glory!" every time you breathe it in;
When you're hungry every minute—yes, an' thirstier'n sin—
Then I get so awful happy when the chores has all been done,
An' I get out my harmonicy, all ready fer the fun
That we have most every evenin' 'round the fireplace, where we set
Tellin' stories an' a-drinkin' all the cider we can get.

Maw she gits the nuts an' apples—baked ones, juicy, big an' sweet—
Pops the corn an' says, "My gracious! what a lot of stuff to eat."
Paw goes out an' draws the cider, sweet but snappy, in the jug—
I'm the one that allus pours it—ever'body gits a mug.
Wimmen folks take their'n plain—says it's best 'ithout the "bite;"
Dad an' me takes our'n with "fixin's"—nothin' though to make us tight—
Jest a little dash of home-made pepper sauce to make it "nip"—
Red-hot poker makes it sizzle—drink 'er down an' kill the grip!

Oh! I'm happy, happy, happy, when the fun is goin' on,
An' I'm happiest of all when Maw she says to me, "Now, John,
You an' Susie play some music, while your paw an' me'll sing."
So I tune up my harmonicy an' give 'em ennything—
"Home, Sweet Home," "The Swanee River," "Harvest Moon" an' "Nellie Gray"—
Sister fingers the melod'on, an' you ought to hear us play!
Why, it's better'n enny circus, so the neighbors all declare—
Say it makes 'em feel so skittish—like they didn't have a care.

I expect up in the city, where the tony folks hang out,
That they have some starchy doin's—an' I've heerd they gad about
Like all sixty to them bankwits, jest dressed up fit fer to kill,
Fillin' up on high-priced vittles—wine an' such like stuff—until
They're just sick an' got the headache. Ain't no fun in that fer me—
Gimme cider, apples, popcorn, an' a heart that's light an' free;
Gimme mother an' the music; gimme father an' the farm—
It's as sweet to me as heaven, an' it's jest as free from harm.

x x x

When Adam awoke just at dusk and saw his third floating rib standing before him in the form of a beauteous female (the very one of his dreams), attired not in choice raiment, but wearing simply a smile and a fig leaf, he did not get fresh and say, "Good morning, Carrie!" He just bowed very polite-like to the lady and said, "Good Eve." And that's how she got her name.

x x x

It doesn't take a Philadelphia lawyer to see that that paper mache whale now on exhibition in Chicago is a "cod" fish.

x x x

IT HAS JUST BEEN DISCOVERED.

That Mary's lamb had fleas as well as fleece.

That the boy who stood on the burning deck was a poker player and had decks to burn.

That the man who wrote "Beautiful Snow" always lived in a hot climate, and that where he is now no Icelander would feel at home.

That school children in the "B" class are most apt to have hives.

That Noah and not Edison was the inventor of the ark light.

That the Old Maids' Association has started a crusade to have the Isle of Man blotted out of all the geographies.

That the Naples authorities have at last succeeded in stopping the eruptions of Vesuvius by the use of sulphur and molasses.

That in Missouri they call chewing gum statistics "wax" figures.

That the reason George Washington cut down the cherry tree was to give his father a chance to get a reputation.

That Eve was the originator of the phrase "There ain't a-goin' to be no core."

That the person who reads Longfellow's poems is apt to get full of "Excelsior."

That while honesty is the best policy, some men have the habit of letting their policies lapse.

That the "Charge of the Light Brigade" was inspired by a visit from the gas collector.

That Lord Bacon was a high liver.

That the King of Yap who recently died and left $1,000,000, was not the only rich member of his family. There are numerous wealthy yaps in the U. S. senate.

x x x

A Michigan editor writes: "Cold feet have been the cause of more divorces than either strong drink or jealousy." From this startling declaration we take it that the brother is a married man and that his wife—but why pry into family affairs?

x x x

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. Q. Kumber: The best way to remove warts from pickles is to first place the pickle in a blacksmith's vise and keep screwing until the pickle emits a soft moan. Then take a hammer and a sharp cold chisel and deftly disengage the warts one by one. If the pickle shows signs of suffering give it ether, but never manifest any sympathy. Then file the rough edges off, being careful not to mar the pickle's complexion. After releasing the pickle from the vise dip it in a mixture of glue and horse radish to close the pores. Bathe in warm rain water scented with bergamot. Wipe dry with a damp dishcloth, sprinkle with paris green to give it a natural color and serve with whipped cream.

Tootsie Poochface: To remove freckles—first, drive a tack in each freckle to hold it in place, then take a sharp paring knife and cut around the edge of each one, after which remove the tacks quickly and the freckles will come away with the hardware. Carefully putty up the holes that are left, sandpaper the surface and coat the entire face with pink porch paint. For a week or ten days eat nothing that will rust the skin, being especially careful about swallowing iron filings. At the end of that time the paint will peel off, the freckles will all be gone and you will not recognize yourself.

Mrs. Jess Wedd: The reason your sponge cake was a failure was because you should have used flour instead of cornmeal as the basis, mixing freely with sorghum and Canary Island sponges, instead of carriage sponges and lard. The latter brand of sponges is no longer aw fwah. To make the cake extra light inflate the sponges with a bicycle pump.

O. Mye Bunyan: The quickest and cheapest way to get rid of a corn is to place your bare foot on a stump, clinching the big toe over the far edge; then take a sharp hatchet and by a dextrous, swinging movement separate the corn from its base. If the toe still remains and the corn has disappeared, cover the freshly exposed root with shoemaker's wax, wrap with binding twine soaked in lard oil, and get a pair of crutches.

Madge: Sapolio will not help your case. The surest cure for buckwheat itch is to buy a currycomb and eat nothing but codfish balls.

x x x

Nightcaps are coming back into style, so we notice in the papers. Whether or not the ingredients have been changed is not stated.

x x x

The Flemish for automobile is "snelpaadelzoonsdersperspstroolrijuig." Horrors! Think of getting run over by a snelp—well, you know the rest.